

that the usual foodplant has disappeared from much of the countryside. It is possible that *w-album* uses blackthorn occasionally as an alternative to elm. This may explain the sightings of unidentified hairstreaks seen flying around blackthorn in areas well outside the normal distribution of *S. pruni* (cf. Symes, *Ent. Rec.*, 80: 40). One thing which could undermine this theory is that blackthorn is one of the most frequently beaten shrubs by those collectors who use this method to obtain larvae. With this in mind, I have made enquiries but have not been able to find a single instance of *w-album* larvae being beaten from blackthorn. If anyone does know of an instance, then I shall be glad to hear from them. On the other hand, the use of blackthorn could simply be a more recent trend resulting from the disappearance of the usual foodplant.

In Gloucestershire, *w-album* had a population explosion in the fine summers of 1975 and 1976. The butterfly was more widespread and numerous than I have ever seen it anywhere before. Ova were very easy to locate on those elms which were still disease free. In 1977, several fully fed larvae were observed seeking pupation sites and I looked forward to seeing imagines around their favourite trees later. This was not to be, as in contrast to the two previous summers, only two were seen. 1978 was even worse, I saw one pupa and no imagines on the few remaining elms. A gloomy picture and observers in other parts of the country have made similar reports. Time will show if *w-album* can continue to be a member of our countryside by using alternative foodplants. — JOHN McFEELY, 90 Stonechat Avenue, Heron Park, Gloucester.

THERA JUNIPERATA L. (JUNIPER CARPET) IN WARWICKSHIRE.— Among some moths sent to me for identification was an example of *Thera juniperata* L. taken by Mr. Alan Garner at a lighted window near Nuneaton on 8th October 1978. Another was seen two days later. There is no juniper in the area, so either this was a dispersal flight — the wind was southerly at the time — or possibly this species is beginning to establish itself locally on garden conifers, as *Eupithecia pusillata* (D. & S.) does so readily.

It is perhaps worthy of note that on 11th October 1963 I found a Juniper Carpet on a tree trunk in the town of Rugby; I assumed it had bred on *Cupressus* growing in a nearby cemetery. Both this and the Nuneaton example are of the southern form, not as dark as specimens I have bred from North Lancashire. — R. G. WARREN, Wood Ridings, 32 Whitmore Road, Trentham, Stoke-on-Trent.

DANAUS CHRYSIPPUS L. IN MALTA.— During a bird ringing session of the Ornithological Society, at Xemxija, St. Paul's Bay on the 14th October 1978, at approximately 8.30 a.m. a friend called out saying he had just seen a strange butterfly flying amongst the vegetation. I was soon on the spot and to my surprise I saw a very rare species of butterfly for the Maltese Islands, the *Danaus chrysippus* L. I had no net with me, and all I could do was to throw a light jacket onto it, and luckily

soon had it secured in a cigarette box. As usual I hurried home and soon contacted Mr. Anthony Valletta, who after a few minutes was at my place. The specimen turned out to be a male.

The only two previous documented records for this species had been *Danaus chrysippus* L. var. *alcippus* Cram. The first record was taken on the 4th June of 1923, by Col. Harford in Hastings Gardens at Valletta, and the 2nd in 1952, 29 years later, by Mr. Anthony Valletta, two males taken on the 10th April from Wield is-Sewda, Attard. In the same month of the same year (1952) two more were observed at Villa Gomerino — limits of Rabat.

It is of interest to note that like Mr. Anthony Valletta observed when he collected his two specimens back in 1952, we had a very large influx of Painted Ladies (*V. cardui*) and Small Whites (*P. rapae*) during the same week this specimen was taken. Although this butterfly has a wide distribution, from Africa across Asia into the Indo-Australian region, the vagrants we get in Malta must be coming from Africa (North and West). The var. *alcippus* Cram. is found only in Africa. The fact that the species is recorded as a vagrant on our Islands shows that they are to be considered as accidentals, and not a normal migratory species to this part of the world.—References: 1969, Williams, J. G., *Butterflies of Africa*. Collins. 1971, Valletta A. *The Butterflies of the Maltese Islands*. Progress Press Co. Ltd. — GUIDO BONETT, 76 Valley Road, B'Kara, Malta.

TRAPPING AND TREACLING.—Trapping in the Cévennes during August 1978, using a conventional mercury vapour moth trap, yielded some interesting and unusual records from at least six orders of insect. There were always a few female Oak Eggers (*Lasiocampa quercus* (Linnaeus)) attracted to the light but on one occasion a male made its appearance. Another surprise was a specimen of the Tree Grayling (*Hipparchia statilinus* Hufnagel). Winged ants invaded the light on another occasion, carpeting the ground and making observation and identification of other insects almost impossible; and on another evening two honeybees were recorded. Other interesting records for the latter half of August included a siphonurid ephemeropteran, a mantispid neuropteran, and a red damselfly (*Ceriagrion* sp.).

Treacling with a mixture made up from Pastis, black rum, Martini, beer, local red wine, honey and concentrated orange juice, which was liberally daubed over gnarled olive stumps, proved immediately effective from the first night of application. Even on nights when there was a full moon and no cloud cover moths were plentiful at the reacle but on occasions entirely absent at the light. The species most readily attracted to the treacle were the Red Underwings (*Catocala* spp.), but they had to compete with hordes of ants for food. It was noticed that during the day that various Satyrid butterflies fed off the sweet mixture.—DR. JOHN FELTWELL, 35 Fishers Road, Staplehurst, Kent, TN12 0DD.